LISTING OF CLAIMS

1. (previously presented) A topical composition comprising:

about 5% to about 25% (w/v) ascorbic acid;

a non-toxic zinc salt; and

water,

wherein,

the composition has a pH of about 3.5 to about 4.1;

the composition does not comprise tyrosine;

and the composition is prepared by a process comprising:

(a) dissolving about 10% to about 50% of the ascorbic acid in water at a temperature of between about 60°C to about 90°C to provide an aqueous ascorbic acid solution of at least 20% (w/v);

(b) cooling the aqueous ascorbic acid solution to below about 40°C;

(c) combining the aqueous ascorbic acid solution with water, a non-toxic zinc salt, and ascorbic acid to provide a mixture comprising water, a non-toxic zinc salt, and about 5% to about 25% (w/v) ascorbic acid; and

(d) adjusting the pH of the mixture to about 3.5 to about 4.1.

2. (canceled)

3. (previously presented) The composition of claim 1, wherein the composition has a pH of about 3.7 to about 4.0 and the pH is adjusted to about 3.7 to about 4.0 in step (d).

4. (original) The composition of claim 1, further comprising an anti-inflammatory compound.

5. (previously presented) The composition of claim 4, wherein the anti-inflammatory compound is a sulfur-containing anti-inflammatory compound.

6. (previously presented) The composition of claim 5, wherein the sulfur-containing anti-inflammatory compound is cystine, cysteine, N-acetylcysteine, glutathione, cysteamine, S-methylcysteine, or methionine.

7. (previously presented) The composition of claim 4, wherein the anti-inflammatory compound is an aminosugar.

8. (previously presented) The composition of claim 7, wherein the aminosugar is glucosamine, mannosamine, N-acetylmannosamine, galactosamine, glucosamine-6-phosphate, N-acetylglucosamine, N-acetylmannosamine, or N-acetylgalactosamine.

9. (canceled)

10. (previously presented) The composition of claim 1, wherein the water is distilled water, deionized water, or distilled deionized water.

11. (previously presented) The composition of claim 1, wherein the non-toxic zinc salt is present in the topical composition in an amount ranging from about 0.5% to about 5% (w/v).

12. (original) The composition of claim 11, wherein the non-toxic zinc salt is zinc sulfate.

13.–14. (canceled)

15. (original) The composition of claim 1, wherein the water is distilled or deionized water.

16. (previously presented) The composition of claim 1, further comprising a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

17. (previously presented) The composition of claim 15, wherein the pharmaceutically acceptable carrier is alkyleneglycol, hydroxyalkylcellulose or a mixture thereof.

18.–20. (canceled)

21. (previously presented) The composition of claim 1, further comprising a stimulant of protein synthesis.

22.–23. (canceled)

24. (previously presented) The composition of claim 1, comprising about 15% to about 25% (w/v) ascorbic acid.

25. (previously presented) The composition of claim 1, wherein the topical composition is an aqueous solution, a serum, a lotion, an ointment, a cream, or a gel.

26.–35. (canceled)

36. (previously presented) The composition of claim 1, comprising about 10% to about 25% (w/v) ascorbic acid.

37. (previously presented) The composition of claim 1, wherein the aqueous ascorbic acid solution of step (a) has a pH of about 2.0 to about 2.5.

38.–41. (canceled)